

Governor's Water Augmentation Council

Desalination Committee

Summary of Committee Progress

February 10, 2017

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Location: Arizona Department of Water Resources

The Desalination Committee held our third meeting at the Bureau of Reclamation Office in Yuma on January 19th.

The Committee is comprised of several GWAC Members, their appointed representatives, and technical experts requested by the Committee Chair. Current Committee Members are: Philip Richards and Bruce Hallin who were appointed by Dave Roberts of the Salt River Project, Brian Payne appointed by Warren Tenney of the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association, Wade Noble from the Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona, and Chuck Cullom appointed by Ted Cooke from the Central Arizona Project, Chuck Graf and Trevor Baggione representing Misael Cabrera of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, John Kmiec who serves the Town of Marana, Glenn Hamer of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Gerry Walker of the Arizona Department of Water Resources, and Sandy Fabritz of Freeport McMoran, Inc.

Although the Committee is run by appointed members, our process allows for public input and encourages feedback from members of the public.

Mike Norris from the Bureau of Reclamation gave the Committee a presentation and a tour discussing the Yuma Desalination Plant, its current status, and what it would require in terms of cost and materials to get the plant running at one-third, two-third, and at full capacity. I would like to thank Mike, Maria Ramirez, Luis Cruzado, June Wolfe and

Juan Guzman for their hard work in preparing the tour and the space for our meeting.

The tour was followed by a meeting in the afternoon beginning with a presentation from Chuck Cullom, the Colorado River Programs Manager for the Central Arizona Project (CAP), who updated the Committee on the Yuma area brackish groundwater investigations. Chuck Cullom's presentation is available on the ADWR website.

In 2008, Montgomery & Associates, Inc, prepared a study for the Central Arizona Water Conservation District focusing on sources of brackish groundwater within the State of Arizona for augmentation purposes. Chuck Cullom was invited to provide a brief overview of the report. Mr. Cullom presented information regarding the pros and cons associated with developing the resource in the areas identified in the study. They included the West Salt River Valley Alluvial Aquifer, Coconino Aquifer in the Winslow-Leupp Area, the Gila Bend Alluvial Aquifer, the Yuma Area Alluvial Aquifer, the Picacho Basin, and the Willcox Playa. The table you see on the screen is how the Committee will investigate each of these areas in accordance with the categories listed across the top row. I have met with members of the Committee outside of the formal meeting to share thoughts and insights where to focus the efforts of the Committee going forward. We have found that for nearly all of these areas, determining an end user for the product, obtaining public acceptance for a project, and, above all, brine disposal challenges for the in-land locations are of the greatest concern. Once a suitable location has been identified, the Committee must not only ask how to finance the project, but who will buy the produced water. Considering that many of these projects may take from six years to more than ten years to complete, it may be wise to begin a desalination project sooner rather than later as the cost for it will not get any cheaper than it is today.

I have also recommended that the Desalination Committee engage with the Finance Committee following three additional meetings and to create a project proposal for the GWAC to consider before the end of the year.

At this time, the only request I have for additional assistance from ADWR are any publications and supplemental information in regards to the six target areas in the state for brackish water resources mentioned in the Montgomery & Associates report.

Mark Holmes, Water Resources Manager for the City of Goodyear, offered to share information in regards to the City of Goodyear's wetlands brine disposal pilot project for the next Desalination Committee meeting.

The next Committee meeting will be held at the Arizona Department of Water Resources. The meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2017.